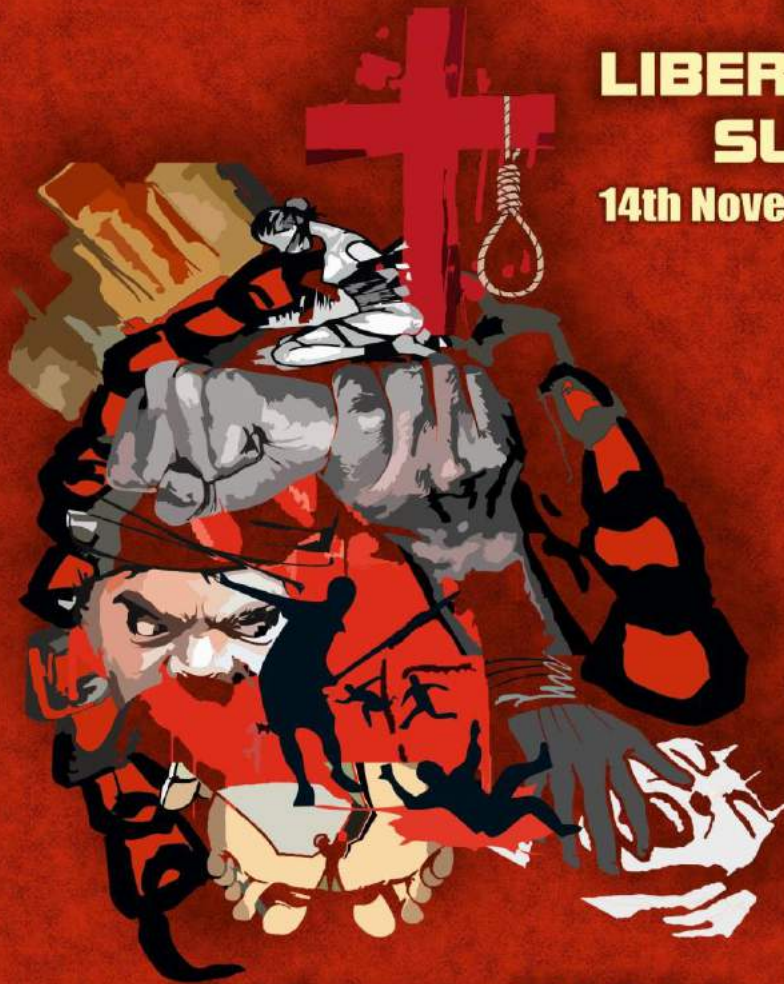


**DALIT  
LIBERATION  
SUNDAY**  
14th November 2021



**God says 'NO' to  
Caste Discrimination**

...You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a  
Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile;  
but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean.  
Acts 10:28"



Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi Concerns

**National  
Council of  
Churches in India**

Office for SC/BC

**Catholic  
Bishop's  
Conference of India**



## **FOREWORD**

**... and he (Peter) said to them, “You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean”** (Acts of the Apostles 10: 28)

No one can serve Christ and caste: practice of caste is sin and untouchability crime. This affirmation has been the driving force for the Churches’ campaign against caste discrimination. For over a decade now the churches in India have been advocating for such an affirmation, seeking to show the way out from what is alleged to be the ‘single largest structural oppression in the whole world’ – caste discrimination, that is discrimination based on work or decent. In India, we give it a religious sanction both overtly and covertly.

That the PRACTICE OF CASTE IS SIN, is drawn from such divinely inspired insights as is recorded in the statement of Peter the Apostle in Acts 10:28. It was a new gospel in Jesus’ time; and indeed in our times as well. While in our contexts accepting all peoples without discrimination is considered polluting, the Christian gospel stands along with many others on the other side proclaiming to the world (that God shows) not to call anyone profane or unclean.

A faith affirmation such as this, particularly in the Indian context of *dalit* discrimination, forms a foundation to the many expressions of affirming life of all. Jesus said that a house divided will not stand. We seek to build a strong India and a vibrant life-flourishing global community. To this end:

- may God grant us the grace to overcome the SIN of discrimination and grant us grace to sow the seed for a rich and diverse community that draws from the life-affirming heritages of all communities
- may God grant us the grace to condemn the philosophies and religious phenomenology that stratifies and structuralises discrimination, in this case discrimination based on work and decent
- may the non-discriminatory Christian gospel evoke the liberative motifs of every peoples, groups, communities and their faiths as we seek to build an integrated, just, fair and equitable interdependence of all peoples, groups and communities

The annual CBCI-NCCI joint observance of the **Dalit Liberation Sunday** is a firm step toward helping the churches grow in this commitment to stand up, with all else, against caste-discrimination in Society and thus also in the Church.

God says **NO to caste discrimination**. And the people of God cannot but say **AMEN**.

**Rev. Asir Ebenezer**  
**General Secretary**  
National Council of Churches in India

## **INTRODUCTION**

Caste system play a very central role in defining the human rights of various oppressed and poor people in India, because the existing Indian social order based upon the caste system, controls the rights of the different groups in our society. Inequalities in several fields are very much prevalent today and very significant to the local Indian context, the age old practice of caste system and relegating a certain section of people to the bottom of the caste structure is predominantly seen and experienced by the Dalits of this country. The call for elimination of inequalities is in essence a call for freedom from structures that create inequalities.

As Church, we must introspect to see how we can treat all equally with respect and dignity. We must speak up when atrocities happen and be in solidarity with those who are risking their lives to address discrimination and violence. Developing policies of non-discrimination and inclusive policies that clearly state that members of the church will not be discriminated nor will they discriminate and excluded because of their caste is critical for the faith to be translated into action. Affirmative action policies are needed in appointments in the Church institutions so that the church leadership has an adequate representation of all sections. It is critical that the church recognize the specificity and the severity of Violence against Dalit Women, other sexual identities and ensure there are specific provisions for the participation of women. Church needs to develop theological, liturgical resources purging caste from churches. Church needs powerful expression of Dalit culture in worship, liturgy, theology and curricula. The curriculum, syllabus and modules that are being used for Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, Youth Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, Lay preachers should include Dalit perspective and have chapters specifically looking at social inclusion and the impact of caste in the church. There needs to be a special focus on Gender and Sexuality.

The theme - **God says NO to caste discrimination (Acts 10:28)** calls the churches/institutions to be concrete witnesses - free of caste division, caste discrimination and caste violence as well as to stand in solidarity with all those who are affected by caste structures. We take this opportunity to invite you to observe Dalit Liberation Sunday on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in your church/ local parish/ institution. However, if you already have some programs on 14<sup>th</sup> November, you may think of observing this special day on later Sundays. Herewith we are sending you a special order of worship and Poster for the day. You may take the freedom to use the entire worship order and translate it in your vernacular language or adapt parts of it.

In Christ,

**Pradip Bansrior**

**Executive Secretary**

Dalit and Tribal/ Adivasi Concerns

National Council of Churches in India

## **“No one can serve Christ and caste!”**

An AFFIRMATION OF FAITH from the  
**National Ecumenical Conference on Justice for Dalits,**  
*Convened by NCCI in partnership with WCC, New Delhi, 22-24 October 2010*

The Church is called to denounce and resist the ‘spiritual forces of evil’ (Ephesians 6:12) and repent and realize the kingdom of god (mark 1:15). Today caste divisions, caste discrimination and caste violence have saturated the country and divided the church. In this moment of time we are prompted by the spirit to repent from our complicity with caste mentality and dismantle its mechanisms, to reconcile all the victims of the systems, to restore the fullness of life granted to all the children of god and release the power of inherent dignity that has been gifted to all human beings. Dalits are the worst victims of the caste system.

Caste has fragmented us at all levels. Our tables are divided, our communities are divided, and our cemeteries are divided. Dalits bear the inflictions and injuries of such division. We are ashamed that as Christians we are unable to testify to the oneness of life as members of the body of Christ.

Caste discrimination has corroded our inner being and has borne its bitter outward fruits. It has robbed Dalits of their self-esteem; denied them access to places of worship and sources of water for survival; and curtailed their opportunities for education and employment. We are ashamed that we as Christians have Spawned such weeds of discrimination when we had opportunities to sow seeds of acceptance, integrity and justice.

Caste violence has broken the body and bruised the soul. Dalit children are shunned, stunted and have their childhood shattered. Dalit women are beaten, raped, and murdered. Dalit men are dispossessed, locked up, and lynched. The evil confluence of caste, class and patriarchy has distorted human dignity and destroyed human bodies. We are ashamed that we as Christians have remained silent while our brothers and sisters have been violated and killed.

Yet though Dalits have been crushed they have not been Extinguished, Though they have been brutalized they have not despaired. Dalits resilience and resistance in the face of caste division, discrimination and violence invites the church to join in solidarity to denounce and resist the ‘spiritual forces of evil’ even as we must repent and recommit ourselves to the good news that the kingdom of god is at hand.

As Christian we claim to reflect the mind of Christ but we are vested in the logic of caste. Jesus says “*no one can serve two masters, for as slave will either love the one and hate the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other*” (Matthew 6:24). In a context of division, Caste Discrimination and caste Violence we announce from the rooftop: “**No one can serve Christ and caste!**” We also confess that in our Caste-infested world “we have decided to follow Christ.” Empowered by a deep faith in God, Who binds us into communion, who frees us for justice and who heals us towards wholeness, we join

together to live faithfully as disciples of Christ in India today. This involves public confession of our complicity in the sin of casteism, reaffirmation of our faith in a God of justice and a radical commitment to solidarity with those crushed under the weight of the caste system.

### **Our Confession**

*“We have become like rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things to this very day.”* (1 cor4:13b)

We confess:

- Our complicity in sharing in the mindset of caste and perpetuating the workings of evil caste system
- Our individual indifference and collective silence in the face of caste division, discrimination and violence
- Our willingness to let our theological and material resources be captured by the dominant caste and class communities
- Our unwillingness to allow the abundance of social, cultural, political and economic resources given by God to be utilized for the empowerment of Dalits.

### **Our Reaffirmation**

*“The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed...”* (Psalm 103:6)

We Reaffirm:

- Faith in the God of justice who works for abundant life for all human beings. This calls us to name casteism as sin, apostasy and rebellion against God. Caste discrimination is unbelief in God and a crime against humans beings.
- Love for God in ‘the word made flesh’ who links the wounded body of Jesus to ‘the broken ones.’ This calls us to take sides with the Dalits struggling for freedom and wholeness. Casteism is a rejection of Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life. Caste discrimination is the extended wounding of Christ among us as the least and crushed ones.
- The communion of the Holy Spirit that brings healings with reconciliation for Dalits and contrition with reconciliation among Dominant communities. Casteism is a grievance against the Holy Spirit. Caste discrimination manifests signs of enemies of the holy Spirit, Whose greatest gift is love.(1 Cor.13:13)
- The historical working of God, the liberator, accompanier and advocate, who never fails Dalits, at times through the witness of the Church that protects, supports and nurtures the broken ones. This calls us to deepen our solidarity and further our commitment to God’s mission of liberation of Dalits.

- Hope that the reign of God will come on earth as it is in heaven. This calls us to commit to break all walls of separation trusting in the power of spirit to make all things new in the way of Jesus and for the glory of God.

**Our Commitment:**

*“You will know them by their fruits, are grapes gathered from thrones of figs from thistles, in the same way every good tree bears good fruit but the bad tree bears bad fruit...thus you will know them by their fruit.” (Matt 7:16, 17)*

**We Commit:**

- To be faithful to Jesus Christ and to realize that being born again means to be born against caste.
- To put our energies and resources to work to end caste division, caste discrimination and caste violence in our churches and society.
- To make our churches courageous and concrete witness to the body of Christ free of caste division, caste discrimination and caste violence.
- To our churches serving as zero tolerance zones for casteism and caste based discrimination and our churches developing policies on social inclusion. That also involves that our institutions become sites that practice preferential option for Dalits in admission, employment and in perspective.
- To designating Lent 2011 as a time of purging caste from our churches. This will be an occasion for developing resources, both theological and liturgical ,for use in Sunday Schools, Youth Groups, Women’s and Men’s fellowships and pastors and bishops retreats with the specific mandate to root out casteism in our mindset and caste discrimination in our way of life.
- To do all humanly possible with God as our Helper to save Dalits under attack from the regimes of casteism let loose in our nation. As Living members of the body of Christ we will “watch and pray” to prevent Dalit attacks, rapes and murders. Each local congregation and institution will join in God’s mission to be defenders of the Dalit right to live in security without fear and be prompters of the Dalit right to live in freedom with justice in our caste violence prone society.

## **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**Theme : God says NO to caste discrimination (Acts 10:28)**

### **PREPARATIONS**

*(A torn saree or an old rugged saree, stove, steel plates, tumblers, mud pot, a wooden rugged cross, parai, rice-stalk (ganji), cut onion and chillies, spade, long bamboo stick (used to clean the drain), rope, and other articles that relate to Dalit communities. Blue (signifying Oppression); Red (Blood of Christ); and Black (resisting injustice); ribbon strips (approx. 10cms) to be distributed, one strip of any colour per person.)*

### **ALTER ARRANGEMENTS**

*Church as the Altar: The Presbyter/Deacon to lead worship from among the people. Torn sarees to be place on the path-way into the church. All the above-mentioned articles to be brought in a procession and laid on the torn sarees. The congregation members would express discomfort, which is the aim of the arrangement.*

### **PRELUDE**

*While, either the drums (parai, dappu) are being played or cries of lamentation being mildly played, the articles shall be brought in procession and laid on the saree on all four sides.*

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Leader:** We as your people have come to worship you O God. You made us in your image, that we may live without discriminating anyone. Heal our minds and hearts through this worship. Break us and make us so we undo discrimination and dwell in your presence as one people.

**Leader:** In the name of the Creator who made us,

**Response:** **we celebrate the goodness of our lives.**

**Leader:** In the name of the Christ who came to set us free,

**Response:** **we denounce our practices of caste discrimination for your sake.**

**Leader:** In the name of the Spirit who sustains us,

**Response:** **we resist any evil that harms life.**

**Leader:** God, in your presence we gather,

**Response:** **be among us now!**



## **OPENING PRAYER**

**Leader:** God of justice and love, the one who liberates people from all bondages and discrimination, who created all human in God's own image. We seek your presence today in our midst as we have gathered as one body in Christ to worship and adore you. Lord renew our thoughts and actions through this worship so that we may rededicate ourselves to render justice, peace and harmony amidst us. Equip us to Voice against all forms of discriminations, oppressions and unjust human acts. Let your divine presence enable us to worship you in Spirit and in Truth. May your presence hover amidst us as we worship you in truth and in spirit to realise equality in your justice.

**Response:** Amen

**BHAJAN :** <https://youtu.be/wrknMtzsWTM>

- 1) Abhaya karunisu Deva  
Shubhava Needuni Deva  
Ee Baala Payanadalee Aa Aa...
- 2) Manada Dugudava Harisalo Shakthiyaagi Baa  
Kavida Irula Kaleyaloo Jyothiyagi Baa  
Baala Pathava Thoraloo Daariyagi Baa
- 3) Ninna Aritha Jeevake Baalu Chethanavoo  
Deena Dalithara Bidugade Seva Dharmavoo  
Parara Seveyalliye Ninna Poojeyoo

*(Meaning: As we journey through life grant us the gift of fearlessness and of your goodness and mercy, O God. Come as dynamic power and chase away from us the fear of the unknown. Come as the light and take away the darkness. Come as the way and show us the path. Life is vibrant for those who have known you. For such, liberating the Dalits and the downtrodden is the goal. Service and worship are one.) Text and Music: Honey Cabral*

OR

**HYMN :** <https://youtu.be/7bqkTMO5fW8>

Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us;  
teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace.  
Be present, Lord, among us and bring us to believe  
we are ourselves accepted, and meant to love and live.

Teach us, O Lord, your lessons, as in our daily life  
we struggle to be human and search for hope and faith.  
Teach us to care for people, for all, not just for some,  
to love them as we find them, or as they may become.



Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved  
in living situations to do the truth in love,  
to practice your acceptance until we know by heart  
the table of forgiveness, and laughter's healing art.

Lord, for today's encounters with all who are in need,  
who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness and bread,  
we need new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on;  
renew us with your Spirit, Lord, free us, make us one!

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

**Leader:** Great are the sins of caste and its practices we have inherited and greater are the sin we have committed. Let us all pause for a moment and reflect on our actions and let God lead us realise, re-think and undo practices of discrimination.

*(After a moment of silence)*

### **CONFESSION**

**Leader:** I am one amongst the thousands of migrant workers who starved on the road to home with no food in the Pandemic

**Response:** Lord we confess that we failed to take care of our brothers and sisters when they were starving for justice, dignity and equality. They were dying in front of us in their struggles, we couldn't help them and remained a mere spectator.

**Leader:** I am the village child who was beaten blue and black for drinking water in the temple

**Response:** Lord, we confess that many time we have neglected the thirst of our fellow human beings and thought only of our needs and acted selfishly. We have failed both give them water to live and the living water which comes from you as we have thought they might make our wells impure.

**Leader:** I am stranger was chased away when I came to your land education and employment

**Response:** Lord we confess that you have been intolerant towards Dalit, Advasi, Tribal Children and students who come to our land for education and employment.

**Leader:** I am the one who was striped for the perversion of those in power

**Response:** Lord, we confess that we failed to clothe them with justice and love when they were being deprived from their rights, dignity and were striped and left them all empty.

**Leader:** I am the falsely framed Anti National who raised voice to protect our land and forest

**Response:** Lord, we remained in our comfort zone and muted ourselves when we were sought to voice out. when though you say NO to any injustice and oppression but we took the side of the oppressor by not speaking against it.

**Leader:** I am the one who was killed for the honor of the family and caste

**Response:** Lord, we confess that we have been silent about honor killings and been subtle about raising our voice for those who have been murdered for the pride and honor of caste and community.

### **ABSOLUTION**

**Leader:** May the God who preached equality of all life, stretch out God's hand to forgive our sins and inculcate the spirit of equality, justice, peace in us within the unjust prevailing structure and social order. We remember the words of Jesus, "Sin no more" and bring about the reign of God through our words and deeds.

**Response:** Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 10:28**

*(He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.)*

### **REFLECTION/ SERMON**

**Theme: God says NO to caste discrimination – (Rev. M. Emmanuel Koilpillai)**

Society has been witnessing several oppressive systems to overpower weaker domains. Caste is a unique oppressive system that has discriminated sections of humanity for centuries. Based on birth, caste offers immense rights and privileges to the so-called 'high humans' but denies basic rights to innumerable who have been coined as polluted. Unfortunately, religions have nurtured caste for generations. The extended arms of the caste system have entered the very life of the church and became the arch-nemesis against the active witness of the church. Due to Caste identities, the church has become less prophetic and has been inclining towards caste-based congregations or homogenous (single caste dominated) communities, which threatens the core message of Jesus "that they all may be one - John 17:21".

The Church cannot lose its saltiness by modifying its values of fellowship and accommodation. The rising vigil of religious fascism calls us to wake from our complacency on growing caste identity in our communion. The amplification of cultural nationalism[i] and caste-based national identity through sanadana dharma[ii] has been posing serious threats to the prophetic ministry of the church."Cultural nationalism strongly believes in one single culture from which all descended and the alternative cultures of others have been denied"[iii]. Caste-based cultural nationalism propagates an uneven, monolithic, and discriminatory society. The physical, social, and political rights of the subjugated (*people at the bottom of Caste system*) have always been denied. The contours of caste identity decide who must serve and who must be served. On this basis, several communities in India, especially the first Indians[iv] (Dalits and tribals) have been

subjugated to serve the so-called higher communities for centuries. Caste is unbiblical and against the creative will of God. This is why the church has called out to oppose caste identity in every form. Church can't fulfil the will of God unless the backbone of the caste system has broken.

### **Peter at Cornelius house: oversight of God towards the inclusive ministry.**

Luke portrays the Roman centurion positively in Acts of Apostles. C.K Barrett says[v], "Luke tries to bring in lost communities through the gospel of Christ. First, he brought the diaspora Jews, then Samaritans, transgender, and now Roman officials. The rejected and marginalised find their place in God's liberating act through the mission work of the Apostles. Interestingly God powerfully leads the mission by directing the apostles towards the lost people (Philip to the Transgender in Acts 8, Peter to the house of Cornelius).

The spirituality of Centurion Cornelius was nothing less to the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, he shared his resources with the poor and needy and stayed strongly with God. But Jewish cultural ethnicity and religious fanaticism portrayed him as an outsider. The Jewish cultural purity regulations were like the cultural nationalism of the caste system which always stumbles to accept 'the other' and alienates the outsider. Apostle Peter also dragged with this Jewish illusion of 'purity and Pollution', he was skeptical to bring Cornelius into the fold of Christ. But God decided to break the exclusive attitude of Peter, Luke narrates how Peter and other ministers from the Jerusalem church have gone through a series of transformations before accepting Cornelius into the fold of Christ. Peter openly confessed his liabilities in front of the household of Cornelius, and explained the universality of God. "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile, but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean (Acts 10:28). *The confession of Peter is the warning call to those who uphold the caste system even after they claim themselves as the followers of Christ because God never sanctions such people and their deeds.*

### **Declaration of Peter: An ordinance of God to say NO to caste.**

In verse 28 of Acts chapter 10, Apostle Peter accepts the universality of God's love. Peter's transformation was crucial after his vision of a box covered with a blanket' containing all living creatures. God asked him to eat those creatures which were cleansed by God. But Peter refused to eat, restricted himself under the Jewish purity code. Soon after the vision, Peter has understood the universal truth of God; everyone is created by God and in God's image. Every living thing contains the essence of God's image. It is unfair and grave sin to consider someone as polluted and not eligible to receive God's mercy. Peter has decided to break the human-made Jewish purity code which forcibly maintained the bloodline purity and kept the non-Jews outside. Peter acknowledged the truth by saying "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile, but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean" Acts 10:28(NRSV). Peter turned here as a prophet of God with more Transforming power to change the society by sacrificing his cultural identity. *Our God challenges our present-day disciples who still cling to caste identity even after their identity in Christ.*

## **Alternative lifestyle of Jesus: Call for casteless existence :**

The call of Jesus Christ for transforming discipleship challenges the subjugating caste structures. Jesus subverts the oppressive caste system into the egalitarian system. Jesus clarified his mission to the disciples that he came here "not to be served but to serve others (Mark 10:45)". Serving each other is mandatory to trample the head of the caste system. Serving each other challenges the caste system, by emphasizing the fact that we are dependent on each other. The arrogant attitude of 'I am here to rule others' has been falsified by the system of Jesus. Serving one another is a revolutionary system based on love to counter unjust evil establishments like caste. Ched Myers explores this call of Jesus as a call for community leadership with non-violence[vi]. The leadership proposed by Jesus was a participatory one, where all find a place to participate. Serve one another invites us to shed our caste identities to partake in the liberating ministry of Jesus.

B.R. Ambedkar says, "Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of barbed wire which prevents the Hindus from co-mingling, and which has, therefore, to be pulled down. Caste is a notion; it is a state of the mind."[vii] The words of Ambedkar reveal the domineering power of the caste system which rules the minds of the people. Only the redemptive power of Christ can cleanse us from the possession of caste. On This liberation Sunday, we must know that our God says NO to caste and abhors it.\* we must allow the spirit of God to renovate our minds from the clutches of caste. Like Apostle Peter, we must prepare ourselves to give up our caste-based identity to embrace the new identity of humanity. Our fight against the caste system starts within ourselves to recognize the other as my sister and brother. ***Whoever glorifies caste, they are losing their identity in Christ. One should remember that, Church has called out to become the crossroad for casteless identities to celebrate our diversities as united in Christ.***

### ***End Notes:***

[i] Cultural nationalism is nationalism in which the nation is defined by a shared culture and a common language, rather than on the concepts of common ancestry or race.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_nationalism)

[ii] Sanatana dharma, in Hinduism, is a term used to denote the "eternal" or absolute set of duties or religiously ordained practices incumbent upon all Hindus, regardless of class, caste, or sect.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/sanatana-dharma>

[iii] Aditi Athreya, Cultural Nationalism in India, Anthropol 2016

[iv] Recent technological advancements in human genetics have paved the way for breakthroughs. The centuries-old claim of bloodline purity has been dismantled through recent genetical studies on mitochondrial DNA which revealed the fact that the Indian mainland contains enormously mixed genomes that can be compared to other regions of the world- First Indians are the ones who arrived earlier than other people

Tony Joseph, Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From, Juggernaut Books, 2018.

[v] C.K Barrett Acts: Volume 1: 1-14 (International Critical Commentary, T& T Clark, 2004, p491.

[vi] Ched Myers, Binding the Strongest Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus, Orbis Books (USA); Anniversary edition (24 November 2008) p278

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Leader: Let us all affirm our faith.

**Response:** We believe in the God who created the world that all may be one and dwell together in harmony, peace and justice.

We believe in Jesus, who was born of Mary, who was often identified with the sub- altern, sidelined, oppressed and marginalized communities, who questioned all injustices and confronted false faith-practices and never sided the oppressors. Jesus, the Messiah was falsely crucified because of such a stand, against the elites in the society; died, buried and rose again, ascending into heaven and will come again to establish God's reign of justice and peace, grounded on love in the second coming.

We believe in the Holy spirit, who urges us to be disturbed with the realities of our times and inspires us to reflect God in our lives, who instigates us to raise voice against injustices and dominant forces that threaten the lives of the whole creation, who motivates us to realize the kin-dom of God on earth.

We believe in the church which is called to encourage and experience the kin-dom of God. We believe in One Baptism that denounces all the evils of the world and renews us to be new creation in Christ. We believe in company of faithful doers of your word. We believe that the kindom of God will be realized on earth by seeing God's image among all of God's creation. Amen.

## **INTERCESSION**

*(Let us hold the ribbons in our hands and intercede with God, remembering that the Blue ribbon symbolizing Oppression; Red signifying the Blood of Christ; Black symbolizing our resistance towards injustices).*

Leader: Let us intercede with God,

Leader: Loving God, we pray for the Dalits, who are facing adverse effects of the unjust development pattern. We pray for those who have been displaced from their lands, livelihood, and have become homeless and helpless. For those who made vulnerable and are deprived from their basic human rights and dignity. Lord, we humbly beseech you to continue to be with us in our struggles and help us face these harsh realities of life.

**Response: Oh God of Love, hear our prayer**

Leader: God of Wisdom, we pray for the students who are denied opportunity of their rightful higher education due to institutional discrimination and casteist agendas of those in power. We pray for those who are abused and sexually harassed for their Identity and caste in schools, colleges and offices. For those who are forced

to be bonded labourers. We pray that you evoke in us the conscience to open our eyes to see these evil and to raise our voice of solidarity and support for them.

**Response: Oh God of Wisdom, hear our prayer**

Leader: God of Justice, Lord we pray for the safety of Dalit women are often subjected to sexual violence, abuse and discriminations. They are used as an object to dehumanize the entire community and are treated inhumanely. Lord give them courage and strength to take a stand against all forms of violence and oppression. Help each and every one of us to empower them and work together hand in hand for just and egalitarian society.

**Response: Oh God of Justice, hear our prayer**

Leader: God of courage, we pray that you accept our prayers and strengthen us to stand for the fight against all injustices that is around us. we also pray for those who are strive bring advocacy and justice against caste discrimination for Dalits communities. We also pray for all the churches and other organizations who are fighting for justice for Dalits. Lord help each and every one of us to realize that we are your co-workers and if we want to participate in your mission we need to say No to any form of discrimination as you are have taught us.

**Response: Oh God of Courage, hear our prayer**

Leader: O Mother God, we pray for your strength upon your daughters and sons, who experience pain in their daily living. The society has been so atrocious to abuse, rape and violate your very creation with brutality of lust, power and greed. We see our mothers being beaten in homes, daughters being raped, sons being molested, sisters abused for dowry, brothers killed over marriages and so on. We pray for your presence and courage to stand up against the evils that continue to ravish lives. Strengthen us O lord, that we may, as a church stand by these, your children, and raise our voice against such atrocities and act justly.

**Response: Oh God our parent, hear our prayer**

**PLEDGE HYMN : <https://youtu.be/2zr9SMm1gII>**



*As the song is sung let us join the ribbons with our neighbour making it into a chain of affirming our solidarity with the Dalit communities around the world and pledge to renounce all practices of caste-based discrimination in church, at home and in society.*

1) I, the Lord of sea and sky  
I have heard my people cry  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save  
I who made the stars of night  
I will make their darkness bright  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

*(Refrain)*

Here I am, Lord, Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night  
I will go, Lord, If You lead me  
I will hold Your people in my heart

2) I, the Lord of wind and flame  
I will tend the poor and lame  
I will set a feast for them  
My hand will save  
Finest bread I will provide  
'Til their hearts be satisfied  
I will give my life to them  
Whom shall I send?

*(Refrain)*

Here I am, Lord, Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night  
I will go, Lord, If You lead me  
I will hold Your people in my heart

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**Leader:** Let us all say the LORD's prayer together

**Response:** Our God, who dwells with the oppressed communities, sanctified be your name. Your reign of Love and Freedom come. Your will to do justice and righteousness be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day courage to stand for what is right, to work for the just and inclusive communities. Forgive us for our blind practices of caste, siding the oppressor and staying muted when we ought to have spoken out, and make us the agents of change. Do not lead us into the attitude of complicity, but deliver us from the danger of becoming docile. For to you belong the power to judge and the power to liberate, forever and ever. **Amen**

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

**Leader:** God of love and peace we are grateful to you for the life you have given us. Lead us to respect life you gave and side the oppressed by saying no to all forms of discrimination, and guide us to continue our struggle against injustice. May we reflect Christ who envisioned just and inclusive communities of the world. Grant us the strength to stand and voice out against injustices. As we go out into the world, renew our minds and hearts that we will be boldened to always say no caste-based discriminations and violence. We ask this prayer in the name of Christ Jesus our liberator.

**Response:** **Amen**



## **BENEDICTION (A Franciscan Benediction)**

**Leader:** May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial understandings of relationships, so that we may live open to God's deeper ways of life. May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom and peace.  
May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain and rejection because of their sexual orientations, so that we may live as an accompanying and comforting community. And, may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done.

**Response:** Amen.

## **CLOSING HYMN : <https://youtu.be/3kVHKuldZyw>**

1) Beauty for brokenness, Hope for despair  
Lord, in the suffering, this is our prayer  
Bread for the children. Justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset, Your kingdom increase!

*Chorus:*

*God of the poor, friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray, melt our cold hearts  
Let tears fall like rain, come, change our love  
From a spark to a flame*

2) Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills  
Work for the craftsman, Trade for their skills  
Land for the dispossessed, Rights for the weak,  
Voices to plead the cause, ff those who can't speak

3) Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame  
Until your justice, burns brightly again  
Until the nations, learn of your ways  
Seek your salvation, and bring you their praise

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## **Dalit Liberation Sunday Themes (2007-2021)**

**2007:** Put away Violence and Oppression, Execute Justice and Righteousness (*Ezekiel 45:12*)

**2008:** Seek Justice, rescue the oppressed (*Isaiah 1:17*)

**2009:** Crossing boundaries and building bridges: Overcoming prejudices (*Matthew 15:28*)

**2010:** Will not God bring justice to people who cry out to God day and night? (*Luke 18:7*)

**2011:** Our God with struggling people (*Exodus 3:7-8*)

**2012:** Break the barriers; build the world of equality

**2013:** “Celebrating Faith by Witnessing” (*Deuteronomy 1:13-18*)

**2014:** “Dalit Culture, Dalit history, Dalit pathos: Regaining the lost identity in Christ”

**2015:** “Climate, Caste and Care for the Earth”

**2016:** “Administer Justice Daily! Deliver the Oppressed (*Jeremiah 21:12*)

**2017:** Religious Freedom of Dalits

**2018:** As for Me and My household. We will serve the Lord (*Joshua 24:15*)

**2019:** Resist Caste: If one suffers all suffer together (*1 Corinthians 12:26*)

**2020:** Challenging Caste: Affirming the Dignity of Dalit Women (*John 4:9*)

**2021:** God says NO to caste discrimination (*Acts 10:28*)

# DALIT LIBERATION SUNDAY

14th November 2021

## Constitutional Mechanism for Upliftment of SC

Article 17 abolishes Untouchability.

Article 46 requires the State 'to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.'

Article 335 provides that the claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

Article 15(4) refers to the special provisions for their advancement.

Article 16(4A) speaks of "reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of

posts in the services under the State in favour of SCs/STs, which are not adequately represented in the services under the State'.

Article 338 provides for a National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes with duties to investigate and monitor all matters relating to safeguards provided for them, to inquire into specific complaints and to participate and advise on the planning process of their socio-economic development etc.

Article 330 and Article 332 of the Constitution respectively provide for reservation of seats in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the legislative assemblies of the States. Under Part IX relating to the Panchayats and Part IXA of the Constitution relating to the Municipalities, reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in local bodies has been envisaged and provided.



Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi Concerns

**National  
Council of  
Churches in India**

Office for SC/BC

**Catholic  
Bishop's  
Conference of India**

